

1 CHAIR JAMES: Mayor Griffin?

2 MAYOR GRIFFIN: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of
3 the Commission. On behalf of the United States Conference of
4 Mayors, the organization that represents most of America's
5 Mayors, I want to thank you for this opportunity to appear before
6 the Commission today.

7 While I recognize the agenda item for my opportunity to
8 give testimony is on the subject of lotteries, America's Mayors
9 believe that lotteries are essentially state issues, whereas we
10 feel that casinos are local and municipal concerns.

11 So while I may stray somewhat from the issue of
12 lotteries, I would be happy to give you my opinion. We don't
13 have one in Nevada, so I guess I would be neutral.

14 But I do hope you will indulge me if I give a little
15 bit of background. This issue of gaming, gambling in America,
16 has been one of continued interest to America's Mayors.

17 At our annual meeting last June, coincidentally in the
18 City of Reno, we convened a caucus of America's Mayors to address
19 the issue of gambling. We elevated that caucuses to a taskforce
20 of our winter meeting last month in Washington, D.C.

21 This taskforce was created, in large part, due to a
22 perceived need among Mayors that an ongoing forum was needed for
23 sharing the experiences and ideas, and sharing policy
24 developments among gaming cities, and particularly sharing those
25 with cities contemplating the introduction of casino gaming into
26 their communities.

27 Additionally the taskforce was created with the belief
28 that your Commission, and any future federally mandated entities
29 studying the issue of gaming, could benefit from the exchange of

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1 ideas from an organization comprised of the local communities
2 that play host to the gaming industry.

3 As Mayors of America's cities, it is our primary goal
4 to communicate to you, and to any future federal panels that
5 casino gaming is a state and local issue.

6 As an exception we recognize that indian gaming is
7 uniquely a federal issue, and any recommendations put forth by
8 this Commission, we believe, must be predicated on the
9 recognition of this fundamental truth, that casino gaming is a
10 state and local issue.

11 During your field hearings this Commission had the
12 opportunity to hear testimony from mayors throughout America who
13 represent who represent gaming cities. Our best recommendations
14 to this Commission come from the mayors who individually reached
15 out and asked you to hear the complete story of the impact of
16 gaming on our communities.

17 In Atlantic City you heard about reinvestment dollars
18 that built a new state of the art high school in Biloxi,
19 Mississippi. You heard that casino tax revenue has repaired or
20 rebuilt over half of that city's streets. In Tunaca, Mississippi
21 sales tax collections increased 50 percent, with local taxes
22 reduced by 50 percent.

23 In fact Mississippi gaming communities are experiencing
24 the lowest unemployment levels in their history.

25 I'm going to skip some of the anecdotal evidence and
26 get right to the recommendations. I think that is really the
27 interest of this group. There has been a lot of discussion
28 during the existence of this Commission as to the social
29 consequences of gaming.

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1 Crime and compulsive behavior are problems endemic to
2 any community whether legalized gambling is present or not.
3 Therefore our advice to you in this regard is simple, keep the
4 focus of such problems in the appropriate context, and consult
5 experts before you release your findings.

6 As Mayors we work every day with chiefs of police and
7 other law enforcement officials to address the problems of crime.
8 We are concerned by this Commission's apparent lack of
9 willingness to accept testimony from organizations such as the
10 International Association of Chiefs of Police, which are actually
11 qualified to address whether there is a correlation between
12 casino gambling and increased crime in communities.

13 America's mayors believe that organizations such as the
14 IACP, be consulted before this Commission, before your draft
15 report is complete.

16 Additionally, despite your efforts to solicit public
17 comment, there is a nagging perception, at least by mayors, that
18 this Commission has not sufficiently reached out across the
19 country for broad based public input on this important subject.

20 In order to succeed in your mission this Commission
21 must not be perceived as captive to narrowly focused special
22 interests. With this in mind we would strongly recommend that
23 the Commission open the draft report for public comment prior to
24 its final release in June.

25 And those are our recommendations. I appreciate the
26 opportunity to speak on behalf not only my city, but the United
27 States Conference of Mayors.

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1 CHAIR JAMES: Just as a point of clarification, it is
2 always -- it is in our timeline that the report will go out for
3 public comment.

4 I received a letter that referred to some lock-out of
5 the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in terms of
6 their inability to speak. And to the best of my ability I have
7 not been able to track tat down to find out what it is referring
8 to.

9 MAYOR GRIFFIN: That was a statement made in January at
10 the winter meeting of the Conference of Mayors that the
11 representatives, both police chiefs, as well as representatives
12 from the International Association of Chiefs of Police attempted
13 to give testimony in, I believe, it was September in Chicago, and
14 they were not allowed.

15 CHAIR JAMES: Does anybody have any recollection of
16 that, or know what that refers to?

17 COMMISSIONER MCCARTHY: I can only say, MR. Mayor, that
18 you are acting on very bad information. We have held hearings
19 all over the country, a number of law enforcement people have
20 testified from the federal, state, and local level. A number of
21 mayors have testified.

22 So I'm aware of the International Association of Police
23 Chiefs. If they had asked to testify before this Commission,
24 they would have been given a seat.

25 COMMISSIONER BIBLE: Why don't you contact the
26 association and ask them to submit any written testimony.

27 CHAIR JAMES: We will do better than that. We will
28 have the staff contact them. I know of -- I really want to get
29 to the bottom of what that is, because in my investigation of it

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1 I have not been able to find any credence to that, at all, and do
2 want to get to the bottom of that.

3 And, again, for the record, and for you to take back to
4 the conference, we have indeed had, and I listed in my response,
5 all the various mayors who have participated.

6 MAYOR GRIFFIN: I certainly hope I didn't imply that
7 America's mayors have not been heard from. I don't --

8 CHAIR JAMES: I don't think you did today, but that
9 certainly was the implication of the letter that I received from
10 the U.S. Conference of Mayors. And I think I copied all the
11 Commissioners on that response, and it is available.

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